

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation comprising the
5 steps of:

automatically determining at least an available user information entry device in
communication with the workstation;

determining user authorisation methods each requiring data only from available user
information entry devices from a plurality of user authorisation methods;

10 providing user authorisation information in accordance with one of the determined user
authorisation methods; and,

registering the user authorisation information provided against stored data to perform at
least one of identifying and authorising the user.

15 2. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 1 wherein the at least an available user information entry device includes a plurality
of available user information entry devices.

3. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
20 claim 2 comprising the step of:
selecting from the determined user authorisation methods the one method wherein the
provided user authorisation information is provided in accordance with the selected one
method.

25 4. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 2 comprising the steps of:
providing to the user a list of the determined user authorisation methods wherein
the step of selecting comprises the step of the user selecting from the provided list, a
single user authorisation method.

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5. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 4 comprising the step of:

determining security information associated with the user and with the selected user authorisation method, the security information different for different user authorisation methods.

6. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 3 wherein each user authorisation method is associated with a security level and wherein the step of registering the user authorisation information is performed to perform at least one of identifying and authorising the user within the associated level of security.

7. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 1 wherein each determined method is supported absent further installation of software components.

8. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 1 comprising the step of retrieving a security key from a key storage location in dependence upon the registration.

9. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 8 wherein the security key is an encryption key.

10. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 8 wherein the security key is a password.

11. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 1 comprising the steps of:
at intervals prompting an individual using the workstation to provide user authorisation information; and,

registering the user authorisation information provided against stored data to perform one of providing access to the secured data and denying access to the secured data in dependence upon the registration results.

- 5 12. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 1 comprising the steps of:
upon access to secured data prompting an individual using the workstation to provide user authorisation information; and,
registering the user authorisation information provided against stored data in accordance
10 with a user authorisation method to perform one of providing access to the secured data and denying access to the secured data in dependence upon the registration results.

13. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation comprising the steps of:
15 providing a plurality of supported user authorisation methods and associated security levels for each user authorisation method;
providing user authorisation information to the workstation;
determining from the plurality of supported user authorisation methods an authorisation method requiring data only from the provided user authorisation information; and,
20 registering the user authorisation information provided against stored data to perform at least one of identifying and authorising the user with the associated level of security.

14. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 13 comprising the step of:
25 selecting from the provided user authorisation methods a method wherein the provided user authorisation information is provided in accordance with the selected method.

15. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 14 comprising the steps of:
30 at intervals prompting an individual using the workstation to provide user authorisation information according to the selected method; and,

registering the user authorisation information provided against stored data to perform one of providing access to the secured data and denying access to the secured data in dependence upon the registration results.

- 5 16. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 13 comprising the step of:
determining security information associated with the user and the security level, the security information different for different user authorisation methods.
- 10 17. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 16 wherein the step of determining security information comprises the step of retrieving a security key from a key storage location in dependence upon the registration.
- 15 18. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 17 wherein the security key is an encryption key.
19. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 17 wherein the security key is a password.
- 20 20. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 13 comprising the steps of:
upon initiating access to secured data prompting an individual using the workstation to provide user authorisation information; and,
registering the user authorisation information provided against stored data in accordance
25 with a user authorisation method to perform one of providing access to the secured data and denying access to the secured data in dependence upon the registration results.
21. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation comprising the steps of:
30 providing a plurality of user authorisation methods, some user authorisation methods requiring user authorisation information from more than one data input device;

providing user authorisation information;
registering the provided user authorisation information against data stored in a database
of user authorisation data;
when the data matches the stored data within predetermined limits, determining a security
5 level for the individual in dependence upon the provided user authorisation information
and the plurality of user authorisation methods; and,
authorising user access within limits based upon determined security level.

10 22. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 21 wherein user access is limited by limiting access to security keys based on the
determined security level.

15 23. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 22 wherein the security keys include encryption keys.

24. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 23 wherein the security keys are stored within a portable storage medium.

20 25. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 24 wherein access to some security keys is provided when a user is authorised
according to a method of user authorisation but is denied when a user is authorised
according to another method of user authorisation.

25 26. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 22 wherein the security keys include passwords.

27. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in
claim 21 comprising the steps of:

30 selecting a user authorisation method from the plurality of user authorisation methods
during execution; and,

providing user authorisation information in accordance with the selected user authorisation method.

5 28. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 21 comprising the steps of:
automatically determining a presence or absence of user information entry devices in communication with the workstation, the user information entry devices including a keyboard, a card reader, and a biometric input device; and,
determining user authorisation methods from the plurality of user authorisation methods
10 that require data only from user information entry devices which are present.

29. A method of authorising a user in communication with a workstation as defined in claim 28 comprising the steps of:
selecting a user authorisation method from the plurality of determined user authorisation
15 methods; and,
providing user authorisation information in accordance with the selected user authorisation method.